

**Criminal Justice Partnership Program (CJPP)
Local Program Evaluation Guide
for
Advisory Boards
Prepared January, 1999
by
Office of Research and Planning, N. C. Department of Correction**

Introduction

North Carolina General Statute 143B-272.11 (g) requires each local Criminal Justice Partnership (CJPP) advisory board “to monitor and evaluate the impact of the community-based program and prepare a written report.” Advisory boards may conduct their own evaluation or hire an evaluator to conduct the research. This CJPP Evaluation Guide is designed to assist local advisory boards with evaluation activities. The Office of Research and Planning staff is also available to provide further guidance and technical assistance to advisory boards or evaluators.

Why Evaluate?

Evaluations are undertaken for a variety of reasons: to assess the effectiveness of new programs; to judge the worth of ongoing programs; to improve program management and administration; and to satisfy the accountability requirements of program stakeholders (groups of people affected by the program including local criminal justice officials and local and state decision-makers and policy-makers). The General Assembly requires the State Criminal Justice Partnership Program to evaluate categories of programs (e.g. the day reporting center model versus the substance abuse treatment model) in order to make appropriate policy and resource recommendations regarding the program as a whole. Local advisory boards are authorized to monitor and evaluate their individual programs in order to make sound program management and improvement decisions. Local evaluations can assist advisory boards to fine-tune a program by redefining the target population, changing the delivery system, or otherwise modifying the program to improve its effectiveness or efficiency.

Evaluation helps programs be accountable for results. Research results inform program staff and policy-makers about the degree to which programs are effective- that is how successful are they in providing their intended target populations with the envisioned services and/or control. Evaluation results also provide information on program policies and operations. Evaluation uses actual *performance data* to measure progress towards program objectives and tells whether programs are improving over time.

What is Evaluation?¹

Evaluation is the systematic assessment of whether and to what extent a program is implemented as intended and has achieved its objectives. Successful evaluation depends upon both explicit, measurable objectives and a detailed description of how they are to be achieved. The type of evaluation varies depending on the issues to be addressed.

Process evaluation addresses how a program was implemented and operates. It focuses on program *inputs*--resources applied to the program and describes procedures and processes undertaken in delivering services or carrying out the functions of the program. *Outcome evaluation* involves ongoing data collection on program *outputs*--workload measures that indicate how much or how many and *outcomes*--measures of how well the program did in achieving results. It reports on *intermediate outcomes*--changes occurring during or shortly after program participation. *Impact evaluation* focuses on whether a program has its intended impact. It addresses if and why a program has been effective in achieving its goals and objectives. It focuses on the causes of change and measures *long-term outcomes* (after the program participation).

Process Evaluation

A process evaluation is the first step in evaluating whether the program is operating as intended. It answers three questions: (1) the extent to which a program is reaching the appropriate target population, (2) whether or not its intervention delivery system is consistent with program design specifications, and (3) what resources are being or have been expended in the conduct of the program. It should be done before or in conjunction with any other type of evaluation (*Evaluation: A Systematic Approach*, 1993). A process evaluation examines dynamic factors such as the composition and functioning of the board, the use of available resources, and amendments to program design. It describes programs inputs or resources (e.g. the number of staff, the number of contracts let) and program outputs (e.g. numbers of offenders served, number of daily itineraries developed) and progress made toward goals and objectives. The primary focus of the process evaluation is whether the program intervention took place, whether it took place as intended, and what problems were encountered in accomplishing the program intervention. A process evaluation is most helpful after 12 months of stable program operation.

A detailed description of program design, operation and activities is the core of the process evaluation. Descriptive statistics on program participants and historical developments of the program are also important parts of a process evaluation.

Program Description An accurate and complete narrative description of the program is the heart of the process evaluation. In the narrative, include a history of the implementation of the program including dates such as the formation of the board, the application for funding,

¹ This section is drawn from a page in the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) evaluation website. This site is an excellent resource for extensive information about evaluation, including how-to instructions. For further reference, go to the following URL: <http://www.bja.evaluationwebsite.org>

the first offender admissions, etc. Describe the structure of the program including staff, lines of authority, and agencies involved, and an organizational chart. Describe the target population in detail. Include characteristics making offenders eligible for program services, an estimate of the size of this population in the county, and an estimate of the number of offenders the program will serve. Describe what would happen to a typical offender from referral to completion, including what happens at each point in the program. Emphasize decision points, describe services and treatments the offender could receive, and indicate follow-up or aftercare procedures.

Descriptive Statistics Use the CJPP Information Management System to detail characteristics of offenders in the program during the evaluation period. Indicate outputs such as number of admissions, number of referrals and number of program exits.

Outcome Evaluation

Process evaluation and outcome evaluation are not completely distinct. If a program has not conducted a process evaluation after at least 12 months of *stable operation*, process and outcome evaluations can be done simultaneously. Outcome evaluation describes whether the desired effects occurred- whether the offender's behavior changed. It provides data about the extent of the problems and needs that precipitated the program and the results of program activities or operations on individual participants.

Outcome evaluation includes a *program description* (see Process Evaluation), *descriptive statistics* (see Process Evaluation) and analyzes the short-term, intermediate outcomes of program activities. It provides a summary of the program's success in meeting its goals and objectives. Outcome evaluation is most helpful between 12 and 24 months after a program is initiated. It focuses on short-term, intermediate measures (while the offender is in the program or shortly thereafter). Outcome measures must be comparative to be useful so they are usually represented in terms of percentages. These measures may compare performance over time (trend), among similar units or contracts, or against a performance standard set by the program or by regulators.

Targeting Analysis An analysis of a program's targeting accuracy is crucial to understanding what the program is actually accomplishing. It helps determine if targeted offenders are actually entering the program. Targeting analysis is also necessary for determining if the program is widening the net. Net-widening refers to bringing offenders within the formal system of punishment when they might ordinarily have avoided it (*Community Corrections*, 1993). The CJPP IMS provides monthly targeting reports that contain the data necessary for this analysis. As with monthly summaries, targeting report data may be aggregated for the evaluation period.

Intermediate Outcome Analysis Outcome analysis must be tailored to individual program goals and objectives. Whereas an output measure is a description of a process or activity (e.g. the number of offenders tested for substance abuse), an outcome measure describes the change that occurred in the offender (e.g. the percent of offenders who tested for drugs or the rate decrease in offenders' testing positive for drugs). Outcome measures relate specifically to the objectives of the program, such as assisting the offender to change or improving offender behavior or providing an alternative to secure custody prior to trial. Below

are examples of baseline intermediate outcome measures. Short-term or intermediate outcomes measure change while the offender was in the program or shortly after release. After establishing baseline outcomes, programs can develop performance measures to judge the attainment of specific performance levels.

Examples of Baseline CJPP Intermediate Outcome Measures--Outcome Evaluation

Protect the Public

Percent of offenders during a year who were convicted of committing a new crime while in Program

Percent of offenders during a year who were convicted of committing a new crime and were revoked while in Program

Percent of offenders during a year who absconded from supervision while in Program

Percent of offenders admitted to Program during a year developed structured day schedule for within 30 days

Improve Offender Behavior

Percent of offenders during a year in Program who were assessed as needing service and were referred to service within 30 days

Percent of offenders who exited Program during a year who completed their treatment goal

Percent of offenders who tested negative for drugs while in Program

Percent of offenders who exited Program during a year who obtained/ maintained employment while in CJPP

Provide Alternative to Secure Custody

Percent of defendants who exited during a year who completed the Program normally and successfully

Percent of defendants who exited during a year who completed the Program early and successfully

Percent of defendants who exited during a year who violated the conditions of pretrial release

Percent of defendants who exited during a year who failed to appear in court

Impact Evaluation

Impact evaluation examines the long-term effects of the program on the problem or condition that the program was intended to affect (recidivism, for example). It involves a rigorous a scientific method using statistical analysis to test assumptions about a given treatment to determine if it caused a particular effect. A general principle applies: the more rigorous the research design, the more plausible the resulting estimate of effect. Though impact evaluation is different in scope from outcome evaluation, similar data are used. Evaluators assess the outcomes of the program by comparing information about participants and nonparticipants, or by making repeated measurements on participants, most commonly before and after an intervention, or by other methods that attempt to achieve the equivalent

of such comparisons. The basic aim of an impact assessment is to produce an estimate of the “net effects” of an intervention- that is, an estimate of the impact of the intervention uncontaminated by the influence of the processes and events that also may affect the behavior or conditions at which the program being evaluated is being directed (*Evaluation: A Systematic Approach*, 1993).

To produce meaningful and interpretable results, an impact evaluation must be well planned and well designed by a trained evaluator. The essential ingredients of an impact evaluation are:

- < program description
- < criteria for program success or effectiveness
- < evaluation plan or design
- < data collection, and
- < valid comparison using statistical analyses.

Research Designs Experimental and quasi-experimental designs provide us with useful models of how to conduct research to establish causal links and determine impact. Rather than just describing changes, the evaluator uses these designs to help explain changes. In an experimental design, the evaluator has control over the assignment of subjects or groups, the introduction of the intervention, and the research conditions. Quasi-experimental designs lack one or more of these controls but are often more feasible in applied research situations. (*Research Methods for Public Administrators*, 1989). The ability to replicate or reproduce the evaluation findings is a crucial test of the worth of a research effort.

Impact evaluation falls at the opposite end of the evaluation continuum from monitoring and should occur later in the life of a program. It requires a trained evaluator who has experience in research design and statistical analysis.

Analysis of Impact Measures Impact analysis must be tailored to the individual program and its goals and objectives. Long-term outcome measures relate specifically to the objectives of the program such as assisting the offender to change or improving offender behavior or providing an alternative to secure custody prior to trial. Short-term or intermediate outcomes measure change while the offender was in the program or shortly after release. Long-term outcomes measure change after the offender has been released from the program. Impact evaluation includes statistical analysis to examine the causes of both intermediate and long-term change in the offender. Below are examples of baseline long-term outcome measures.

Examples of Baseline Long-Term Outcome Measures--Impact Evaluation

Protect the Public

Percent of offenders who were convicted of committing a new crime within 24 months of exiting the Program

Percent of offenders who were convicted of a new crime and revoked within 24 months of exiting the Program

Percent of offenders who absconded supervision within 24 months of exiting the Program

Improve Offender Behavior

Percent of offenders who exited the Program and completed their treatment goal within 24 months

Percent of offenders who exited the Program and tested negative for drugs for 24 months

Percent of offenders who exited the Program and obtained or maintained employment for 24 months

Provide Alternative to Secure Custody

Amount of jail bed days available to the county as a result of proving an alternative to secure custody

Reduction in county's overall failure to appear rate

CJPP Information Management System

CJPP developed an Offender Tracking System to gather data from local programs across the state. It started out as a paper system with counties required to submit paper report forms monthly. In November 1998 the tracking system was automated statewide. The automated offender tracking system is known as the CJPP Information Management System (IMS). The IMS allows local staff to submit data electronically to a computer in the CJPP office in Raleigh, via the World Wide Web.

The IMS is designed to collect detailed information on individual offender participation in CJPP programs. This information is useful for program monitoring and evaluation. The IMS removes the burden of collecting data manually for evaluation, which makes such a study far less time-consuming and less expensive. The IMS works in tandem with the Department of Correction database known as the Offender Population Unified System (OPUS). Authorized CJPP IMS users can utilize offender information from OPUS without having to enter that information manually. The IMS provides specific and detailed information about CJPP-funded program participation and operations.

Appendix A--Glossary of Terms
(Definitions of terms as they are used in this Guide)

Activity--step-by-step process for achieving an objective.

Causal Relationship*--relationship of cause and effect. The cause is the act or event that produces the effect. The cause is necessary to produce the effect.

Comparison Group*--group of individuals whose characteristics are similar to those of a program's participants. These individuals may not receive any services, or they may receive a different set of services, activities, or products; in no instance do they receive the same services as those being evaluated. As part of the evaluation process, the experimental group (those receiving program services) and the comparison group are assessed to determine which types of services, activities, or products provided by the program produced the expected changes.

Dynamic factors--changeable factors such as residence, employment and substance abuse (as opposed to static factors).

Evaluation--systematic assessment of whether and to what extent a program is implemented as intended and has achieved its objectives.

Evaluator--a research professional with training and experience in evaluation.

Goal--general statement of purpose.

Impact evaluation--examines whether a program has its intended impact. Addresses if and why a program has been effective in achieving its goals and objectives, focusing on the causes of change and measures long-term outcomes.

Input--resources applied to the program, expressed in organizational units, people, dollars, and other resources actually devoted to the particular program or activity.

Intermediate outcome--results occurring during or just after program participation, occurring before the long term.

Intervention--an activity or program provided to or on behalf of a program participant.

Long-term outcomes--effects on participants after program participation.

Objective--measurable, performance-related statement that further defines a goal.

Output--how much or how many; details in numerical terms.

Outcome evaluation--examines whether a program is functioning properly, addressing the targeted populations, and/or producing services as intended. Focuses on intermediate outcomes occurring during or shortly after program participation.

Outcome measure--describes, in quantitative terms, the change that occurred in a program participant.

Performance data--explicit measure of effects or results expected.

Process evaluation--describes how a program was implemented and how it operates, focusing on program inputs.

Recidivism--failure of an offender due to criminal activity. The definition varies with regard to how long after program participation the measure is made, and with regard to reason. Some typical recidivism reasons are re-arrest, probation revocation, a new conviction or re-incarceration.

Stable operations--for purposes of the Guide, stable operations means a program that is fully operational for at least 12 months and that has begun to admit offenders to the program.

Statistical analysis--use of statistics to analyze evaluation data to make determinations about cause-and-effect relationships. Results provide measures of how strongly a cause relates to a resultant effect.

Targeting--selection of a particular group for inclusion in or services from a program. Structured Sentencing targets Intermediate offenders and those on Post-Release supervision. Local advisory boards select groups within that target for their local programs. Targeting ensures that resources are used on the right persons and for the right reasons.

URL--Uniform Resource Locator, an address for a website.

Website--a page on the World Wide Web, which is accessible with an Internet browser.

Note: The Bureau of Justice Assistance website has an extensive glossary of evaluation terms. To see the BJA glossary, use the URL on page one and click on Glossary of Evaluation Terms, or use this URL:
<http://www.bja.evaluationwebsite.org/html/glossary/index.html>

*Starred definitions are taken from the BJA website glossary of evaluation terms.

Appendix B--For Further Reference

Following is a list from the Bureau of Justice Assistance website. Each item on the list is a link to a bibliography for that topic. To get to these bibliographies, go to the BJA website listed on page one of this Guide, and click on Evaluation Resources. To go directly to the list of topics, type this URL:

<http://www.bja.evaluationwebsite.org/html/resources/index.html>

Choosing an Evaluation Design

Completing Evaluation Data Collection Procedures

Data Analysis

Describing Your Program

Evaluating Your Program: An Introduction to Evaluation

Framing Evaluation Questions

Refining Evaluation Questions and Selecting Measures

Selecting, Adapting, and Developing Data Collection Procedures

Using Evaluation Data/Findings for Program Operations and Management

Additional Reading by Title

Assessing the Effectiveness of Criminal Justice Programs: Assessment and Evaluation Handbook No. 1. Bureau of Justice Assistance. Prepared by the Justice Research and Statistics Association. January 1994.

Community Responses to Drug Abuse: A Program Evaluation. National Institute of Justice Research Report. Dennis P. Rosenbaum, et al. February 1994.

Developing Performance Measures for Criminal Justice Programs: Assessment and Evaluation Handbook No. 2. Bureau of Justice Assistance. Jerry M. Hatfield. February 1994.

Emerging Roles of Evaluation in Science Education Reform. New Directions for Program Evaluation. Jossey Bass Publishers. Rita G. O'Sullivan. Spring 1995.

Evaluating Intensive Supervision Probation/Parole: Results of a Nationwide Experiment. National Institute of Justice.

Evaluation of The Hampden County Day Reporting Center. Crime and Justice Foundation. Prepared by the Center for Applied Social Research. August 1988.

Evaluation of The Implementation of Pennsylvania's Act 152 (1988): The Quantitative Findings. Human Organization Science Institute. January 1995.

Evaluation and Social Justice: Issues in Public Education. New Directions for Program Evaluation. Kenneth A Sirotnik. Spring 1990.

Evaluation Utilization. New Directions for Program Evaluation. John McLaughlin et al. Jossey Bass Publishers. Fall 1988.

The Importance of Evaluating Correctional Programs: Assessing Outcome and Quality. Corrections Management Quarterly, 1998, 2(4). Aspen Publishers, Inc. 1998

Measurement in Prevention: A Manual on Selecting and Using Instruments to Evaluate Prevention Programs. Center for Substance Abuse Prevention Technical Report, Volume 8. United States Department of Health and Human Services. 1993.

Minority Issues in Program Evaluation. New Directions for Program Evaluation. Anna-Marie Madison. Jossey Bass Publishers. Spring 1992.

Multisite Evaluations. New Directions for Program Evaluation. Robin S. Turpin and James M. Sinacore. Jossey Bass Publishers. Summer 1991.

Preventing the Misuse of Evaluation. New Directions for Program Evaluation. Carla J. Stevens and Micah Dial. Jossey Bass Publishers. Winter 1994.

The Preparation of Professional Evaluators: Issues, Perspective and Programs. New Directions for Program Evaluation. James W. Altschuld and Mooly Engle. Jossey Bass Publishers. Summer 1994.

The Qualitative-Quantitative Debate: New Perspectives. New Directions for Program Evaluation. Charles S. Reichardt and Sharon F. Rallis. Jossey Bass Publishers. Spring 1994.

Results-Driven Management American Probation and Parole Association.

Timely, Low-Cost Evaluation in the Public Sector. New Directions for Program Evaluation. Rita G. O'Sullivan. Jossey Bass Publishers. Summer 1988.